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ABSTRACT

In order to determine the extent of residential segregation among first or second generation Arabs living in and around Paterson, New Jersey, 286 families were located and interviewed. Field data were combined with statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau Population and Housing Summary Tape File 1-A. It was found that residential segregation was not the usual pattern among Arab Americans (which included Syrians, Lebanese, Circassians, Palestinians, and Jordanians). Most of the Arab immigrant families were found to live in working class neighborhoods, either at the city's edge or in one of the adjoining exurbs or small cities (Prospect Park, Haledon, Clifton, Passaic). In these areas, a few families may live fairly close to one another, but several blocks from the next small grouping. Nevertheless, interviews revealed a shared sense of community and frequent interaction patterns based upon life cycle rituals, homeland concerns, religious affiliations, political activism, or limited social situations. The method used to measure the degree of racial segregation--defined as the overall unevenness in the spatial distribution of two racial/ethnic groups--was the index of dissimilarity. Among all the census tracks examined, the mean level of segregation between Arab Americans and Whites was found to be 26 percent. With wide fluctuations, the mean Arab/Black dissimilarity index was 61 percent. Nonetheless, neighborhood racial composition did not appear to be a factor in Arab Americans' choice of residence or desire to relocate. Finally, the segregated distribution pattern of this group was not found to be strongly related to cost of housing. (GC)

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ARAB AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

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ARAB AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION: DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS

Traditional residential patterning of European white ethnics has been territorial clustering near a city's historic center. A considerable body of literature exists about these European immigrant communities (e.g., Thomas and Znaniecki, 1920, 1958; Gans, 1962; Handlin, 1959; Glazer and Moynihan, 1970; Saloutos, 1964; Whyte, 1943; Goldstein and Goldscheider, 1968). Similar patterns have been reported among Asian communities (e.g., Kim, 1977; Kitano, 1969; Lyman, 1974, Petersen, 1971). Other investigators have written about black and Hispanic neighborhood communities (e.g., Pinkney, 1969; Billingsley, 1968; Willie, 1976; Lewis, 1965; Fitzpatrick, 1971; Rodriguez, 1977). In each instance, the ethnic or racial community was easily defined within particular boundaries.

An annual average of 15,000 Arab immigrants have been settling in American cities since 1976, according to the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Services. Little is known about them, however, partly because only limited statistics are kept. For instance, the 1980 census-taking only did a random sampling in cities of 100,000 or more about Arab Americans. State offices base their data on census input, and while the 1980 Census Summary Tapes released in 1982 contain information about whites, blacks, and Hispanics as well as other summary data, specific information about Arab Americans is not accessible by these means.

A few social scientists have studies Arab immigrant communities (Agocs, 1981; Sengstock, 1977; Ansari, 1977; Elkholy, 1976; Kayal and Kayal, 1975; Aswad, 1974). While these studies have offered some

valuable insights, much remains unknown about the dynamics of Arab immigrant communities in the eastern United States. For example, the federal government identifies 40,000 Arab Americans as living in New Jersey. Yet very few well-defined Arab American communities can be recognized. Moreover, the federal government includes under the rubric of "Arab" such non-Arab peoples as Armenians and Iranians, who neither view themselves as Arabs nor do the Arabs themselves.

Field Investigation

Lacking both specific official data and the presence of a clearly visible Arab American community to investigate even though the federal government reported over 10,000 Arabs either foreign-born or of foreign stock living in the Paterson metropolitan area, this investigator set out to find them. Utilizing a team of six trained field workers, we launched a three-month investigation. Approaching first our known contacts and proprietors of the few visible Arab establishments in the area, we were able--through snowball sampling--to identify 2,028 Arab families living in the metropolitan area and to interview all members of 286 families.

Our preliminary findings about their nationalities, religions, socioeconomic status, cohesiveness, intergroup tensions, and assimilation difficulties were reported in a paper to the UAA last year in Flint. At that time discussant Joe T. Darden suggested one direction for further research might be through utilization of the index of dissimilarity (discussed later). This paper follows that suggestion, as well as Dr. Darden's own research framework on residential segregation of American Indians in Michigan. Our focus will be on Arab American residential segregation.

Ecological Theoretical Framework

The ecological approach to residential segregation tends to conceptualize it as an adaptation of a particular group to certain spatial constraints within the urban environment. Implicit in this theoretical framework are three factors: the dynamics of supply and demand in an open market economy, the constraints set by ability to pay, and the group's status which influences its ability to compete for available housing (Hawley, 1950; Alonso, 1960).

Literature in the field is inconsistent on the relationship between ethnic segregation and socioeconomic status of a group. A number of studies have found significant correlations between ethnic segregation and socioeconomic status (Darroch and Marston, 1971; Duncan and Lieberson, 1959; Lieberson, 1961;1963; Guest and Weed, 1976; Darden and Haney, 1978). Other studies have discredited this hypothesis (Taeuber and Taeuber, 1964;1965; Taeuber, 1968; Darden, 1973; Farley, 1977). Some scholars have criticized the ecological perspective for overemphasizing ethnic segregation as a function of socioeconomic factors (Kantrowitz, 1973; Massey, 1979). Social class differences, when controlled, have yielded reduced levels of segregation only at the upper socioeconomic strata, they maintain, and not at all status categories.

From our field investigation we found that residential segregation was not the usual pattern among Arab Americans. Rather than concentrating in recognizable, tightly-knit ethnic subcommities near the city's core, they tended to settle in loose clusters in many neighbor-

hoods near the periphery of the city. Others lived in adjacent exurbs near the location of industrial jobs to be found in Hawthorne, Fair Lawn, Elmwood Park, South Paterson, Clifton, and Passaic (see Figure 1). This recent form of immigrant residential patterning has been found in other cities (Agocs, 1981; Aswad, 1974). Because the ethnic community still exists as an interactional rather than territorial entity, it is in essence a "dispersed village" (Lofland, 1973:136).

Data and Methodology

In addition to the field investigation, data for this paper was obtained from the Population and Housing Summary Tape File 1-A (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). The data consisted of 1) the number of whites and blacks by census tracts, from which the number of Arabs identified through the field investigation were extracted, and 2) the median housing value and rent by census tracts. Those census tracts in communities we had located Arab American families were the only ones included in this study.

Arab Americans were identified as first or second generation Syrians, Lebanese, Circassians, Palestinians and Jordanians. Excluded were Armenians, Iranians, and Egyptians (the latter defined as an Afro-Mediterranean people). For purposes of this paper, only those Arab families identified as living at that residence at the time of the 1980 census were included.

The method utilized to measure the degree of racial segregation, defined as the overall unevenness in the spatial distribution of two racial/ethnic groups, is the index of dissimilarity. This index is

considered the standard measure of residential segregation and is widely used (Massey, 1981:313). It is stated as

$$D = 100 \; {}^{1}/_{2} \sum_{i=1}^{k} | x_i - y_i |$$

Where x_i = the percentage of a community's Arab American population living in a given census tract;

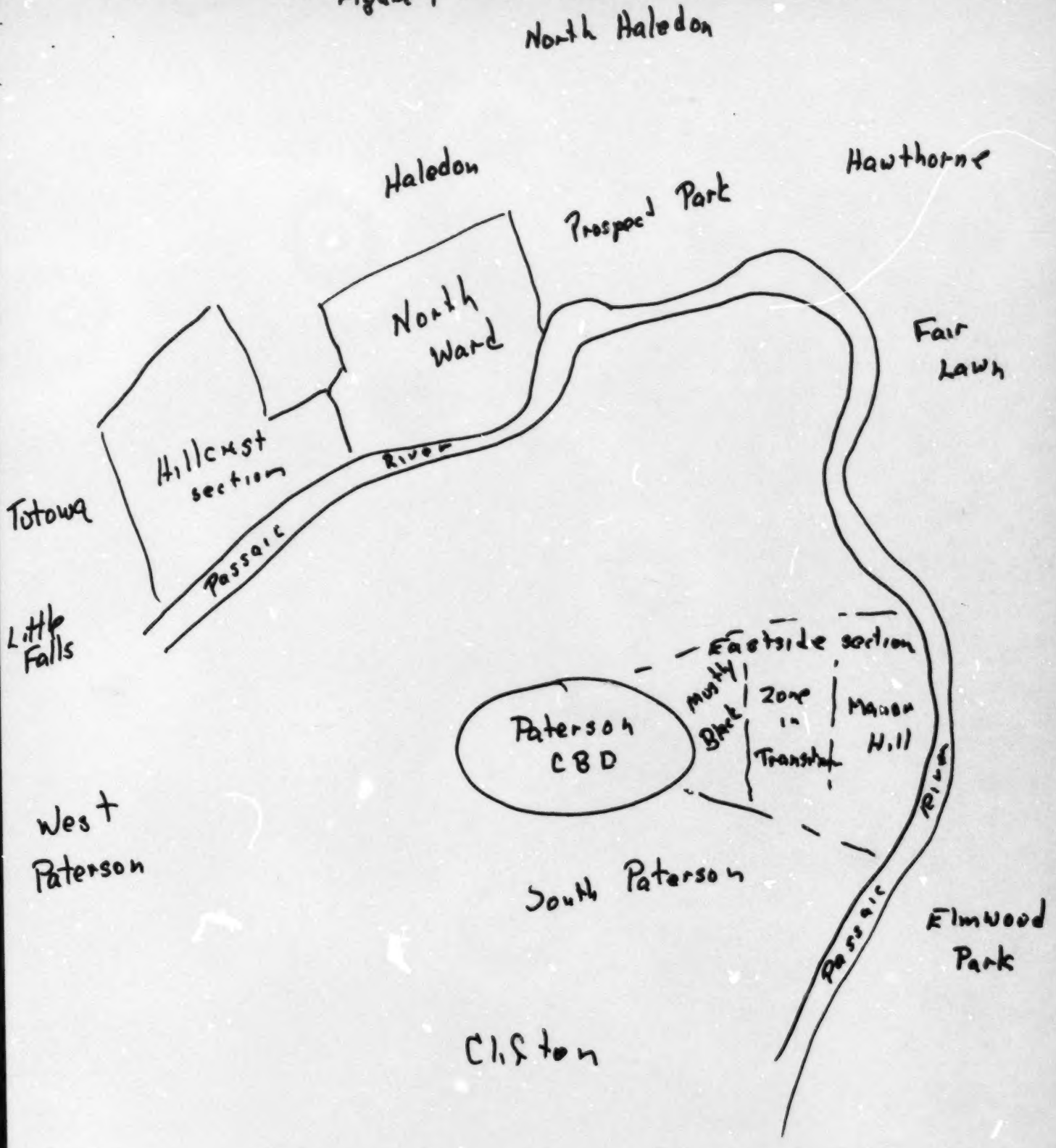
y_i = the percentage of the community's white or black population living in the same census tract;

D = the index of dissimilarity, or one/half the sum of the absolute differences (positive and negative) between the percentage distributions of the Arab Americans and whites or blacks in the communities (Darden and Tabachneck, 1980).

Index values range on a continuum from "0" (no segregation) to "100" (total segregation). This index value identifies what percentage of either group being compared would have to relocate elsewhere to establish an evenly balanced spatial distribution of both groups within that community.

An important related consideration is the impact of housing costs upon residential segregation. Since we found economic diversity among our sample, it was important to identify the extent of this association of cost and location in creating the dispersed village. Utilizing the percentage distribution of Arab Americans and median housing value or rent in the census tracts studied, we computed Pearson correlation coefficients to determine what relationship, if any, existed between these two variables.

Figure 1


North Haledon
Haledon
Prospect Park
Hawthorne
North Ward
Fair Lawn
Hillcrest section
River
Totowa
Passaic
Little Falls
Eastside section
North Ward
Zone in Transition
Mason Hill
Paterson CBD
River
West Paterson
South Paterson
Elmwood Park
Passaic
Clifton
Passaic

Findings

Arab American Segregation in the Paterson Metropolitan Area

Our field investigation had turned up several interesting facts. Most Arab immigrant families lived in working class neighborhoods, either at the city's edge or in one of the adjoining exurbs or small cities (Prospect Park, Haledon, Clifton, Passaic). In these areas a few families may live fairly close to one another, but then one has to journey several blocks to find the next small grouping. Nevertheless our interviews had revealed a shared sense of community and frequent interaction patterns. Ethnic solidarity existed through a cosmopolitan network maintained through communication and life cycle rituals, homeland concerns, political activism, or limited social situations (school, work, nearby families).

A lesser number of first generation Arab Americans, mostly Lebanese, were middle class and lived in nearby suburbs (North Haledon, West Paterson, Little Falls). Also living in these suburbs were many second generation Arab Americans of middle class status. Significantly, 30.2 percent of the 5,973 Arab immigrants living in the Paterson metropolitan area are Orthodox and their nearest church is in Little Falls, while 25.4 percent are Melkite Catholics, and their nearest church is in West Paterson. Curiously, a very small percentage of Arab Americans live in either of these communities. So, even though they may live in Paterson or an exurb, we found most people of these faiths journey to the suburb to attend worship services. This is yet another indicator of the interactional network.

The South Paterson area of the city of Paterson had both the

Table 1

1980 Census Counts

Persons by Race in Selected Census Tracts

Area Name	Total Population	White	Black
Clifton	74,388	72,670	360
Haledon	6,607	6,422	95
Hawthorne	18,200	18,071	10
Little Falls	11,496	11,288	50
North Haledon	8,177	7,931	183
Passaic	52,463	32,210	10,364
Paterson	137,970	70,203	47,061
Prospect Park	5,142	4,916	46
West Paterson	11,293	11,072	41

greatest number of Arab Americans (2,443) and the greatest percentage (10.13). The Hillcrest section of Paterson had the smallest percentage (0.81), but the smallest absolute number was in Little Falls (192). While we could determine that more Arab Americans tended to live in the southern and northern edges of Paterson--as well as in adjoining Prospect Park, Haledon, Clifton, and Passaic--the employment of the index of dissimilarity provided us with comparative information on their residential segregation.

Among all the census tracts examined, the mean level of segregation between Arab Americans and whites was 26.0 percent. The level of segregation ranged from a high of 38.6 percent in Passaic to a low of 15.5 percent in Little Falls (see Table 2). As a small city (pop. 52,463), Passaic has very distinct Polish and Hispanic neighborhoods, which probably generate this higher degree of residential segregation for Arab Americans. Similarly, Paterson has large Italian, Jewish, and Hispanic neighborhoods which would explain its higher 49.6 percentage level of segregation overall. This last finding points out that, although Arab Americans are more greatly segregated in the city as a whole (particularly the North Ward and South Paterson), they are less segregated within those specific areas than other whites. This finding supports the field investigation of identifying a residential pattern of loose clustering. The low level of residential segregation in Little Falls and West Paterson suggests the usual pattern of random home selection in middle class, non-ethnic suburbia.

The Arab/Black level of segregation ranged from a low of 37.3 percent in the North Ward to a high of 67.9 percent in the Hillcrest

Table 2

Arab American Population and Segregation

in Selected Census Tracts of Paterson Metropolitan Area

Census Tract	Arab Population	Index of Dissimilarity		Percent of Total Population
		Arab v. White Ethnic	Arab v. Black	
Paterson (includes areas in addition to below)	5,973	(49.6)	(60.8)	4.32
North Ward	2,214	24.7	37.3	7.44
South Paterson	2,443	26.7	44.1	10.13
Eastside	823	29.2	66.0	2.32
Hillcrest	207	17.4	67.9	0.81
Clifton	1,004	34.4	82.4	1.35
Haledon	257	30.6	54.3	3.89
Little Falls	192	15.5	58.0	1.67
North Haledon	369	19.9	81.5	4.51
Passaic	1,825	38.6	48.6	3.48
Prospect Park	281	31.3	51.4	5.46
West Paterson	194	17.8	79.2	1.72

Source: Computed by the author from field investigation and from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population and Housing Summary Tape 1-A, 1981.

section of Paterson, and an overall high of 82.4 percent in Clifton. Here the pattern of racial segregation helps explain the findings. The North Ward is a stable, racially mixed neighborhood whereas the Hillcrest section has remained a mostly all-white residential area. Clifton, a small, almost suburban type city of 72,670, has a total black population of only 360. Similarly, North Haledon (pop. 8,177) and West Paterson (pop. 11,293) have extremely few black residents, only 183 and 41 respectively (see Table 1).

With wide fluctuations, the mean Arab/Black dissimilarity index was 61.0 percent. Although this clearly reveals a fairly high racial segregation level, it is apparently not due to Arab American prejudice, but rather larger societal patterns. Our field interviews unveiled no discernible evidence of racial bias or tension. In fact, racial composition of the neighborhood did not appear to be a factor in choice of residence or desire to relocate. No interracial tensions or conflicts were reported, and we found a common assumption among Arab Americans that those who lived where they did--white or black--were considered respectable people. Coming from a part of the world steeped in religious rather than racial prejudices, Arab Americans appear to be unconcerned about racial differences in this more secular society.

The Relationship of Housing Cost to Arab American Residential Segregation

Arab Americans are more concentrated (though paradoxically in loose clusters) within some communities in the Paterson metropolitan area than in others. Because cost of housing heavily influences

choice of residential location and those housing costs vary from one neighborhood or community to another, was economics a determinant of Arab American residential patterning? A probable causal relationship between housing costs (rents or home values) and Arab American settlement could be assumed if a disproportionate number clustered in low-valued or low-rental areas. Such a link could not be assumed if no strong relationship between these two variables was found.

Our method of answering this question was computation of Pearson correlation coefficients between the percentage distribution of Arab Americans and median housing value and rent for all census tracts examined. We found a negative relationship in all but one community between the distribution of Arab Americans and the median value of the Housing. The relationship was positive only in the Eastside section of Paterson where the correlation was +.09. Weak negative relationships existed in the Hillcrest section, Prospect Park, Haledon, Clifton, and Passaic. Very weak relationships occurred in the North Ward, South Paterson, North Haledon, Little Falls, and West Paterson (see Table 3). The relationships are significant in all communities except the Eastside section.

Our field investigation turned up the probable explanation for the Eastside section showing a rather weak positive association between residence and housing cost. That area comprises three distinct ecological zones. Nearest to the city's central business district, situated between an elevated railroad line and a wide thoroughfare (Madison Avenue), is one of the older residential neighborhoods.

This almost all-black neighborhood is a low rent area of substandard and/or deteriorating housing. Next to it is a zone in transition, some of it racially mixed and some of it mostly white. Some large Victorian homes on Broadway have been converted into multiple family dwellings, often with a commercial establishment on the first floor. On the easternmost end of this spreading urban blight live a substantial number of Circassians and other Arabic-speaking peoples. The third area is beyond this and known as Manor Hill, its name correctly connoting its typology. Large homes and mansions--including the residence of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Paterson--are located on this large hillside, near carefully groomed Eastside Park. Housing values in the Eastside section range from the very low to the very high. Most Arab Americans reside in the middle range housing in this area.

The correlation coefficients between the distribution of Arab Americans and median housing rent indicated weaker negative relationships than those for owner-occupied housing value. Again, the only positive correlation occurred in the Eastside section, though at +.11 percent it was neither strong nor significant. The relationships were weak in Haledon and Passaic, and very weak in all the others (see Table 3). The weakest negative relationship existed in North Haledon, and the relationships were significant in South Paterson, Prospect Park, Haledon, Little Falls, West Paterson, and Passaic.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients Between Percent Arab American and Median Housing Value and Rent in Selected Census Tracts

Census Tracts	Median Value	N	Median Rent	N
Paterson				
North Ward	-.27*	382	-.16	394
South Paterson	-.29*	477	-.28*	485
Eastside	+.09	182	+.11	189
Hillcrest	-.38*	50	-.11	52
Clifton	-.42*	239	-.18	242
Haledon	-.45*	57	-.37*	70
Little Falls	-.19**	58	-.22**	58
North Haledon	-.28*	95	-.08	95
Passaic	-.40*	416	-.39*	427
Prospect Park	-.46*	63	-.26**	74
West Paterson	-.23**	47	-.28**	47

* Significant at the .01 level

** Significant at the .05 level

Summary and Discussion

This paper is a follow-through study of a field research project conducted last year. Through the index of dissimilarity and computation of Pearson correlation coefficients, we have determined the extent of Arab American residential segregation in the Paterson metropolitan region and assessed the extent to which the spatial distribution of Arab Americans between census tracts is related to the spatial variation in the cost of housing.

We found that although Arab Americans tend to reside in certain areas of the city or its adjacent communities, they settle in loose clusters rather than in more concentrated territories as former European immigrants or Hispanics today. Arab American residential segregation therefore has not reached the high levels that characterize black-white segregation or typical native-immigrant segregation. Neither are patterns of Arab American segregation highly related to the cost of housing, suggesting that economic income is not the key to selecting place of residence. Rather, other social processes, including chain migration and proximity to work, are contributing variables.

The results of this analysis suggests the following:

1. Arab Americans maintain an interactional ethnic community rather than a tightly-knit territorial community.
2. Residential segregation between Arab Americans and whites in the Paterson metropolitan region averaged 26.0 percent in 1980. The level of segregation ranged from a high of 34.4 percent in Clifton to a low of 15.5 percent in Little Falls.

3. Arab Americans are less segregated from whites (26.0) than from blacks (61.0). However, this pattern reflected larger societal behavior patterns and not any apparent Arab racial bias.

4. The segregated distribution pattern of Arab Americans is not strongly related to the cost of housing. However, middle class Arab Americans, like native-born, middle class Americans, are more likely to live outside the city than lower or working class Arab Americans.

Future research on the residential segregation of Arab Americans should examine if this pattern continues with the continual arrival of new immigrants and the role ethnicity plays in the segregation process. Another potentially interesting concern in the racially mixed neighborhoods is whether an increase in either the black or the Arab population causes any changes in perceptions or reactions. Also, if more Arab Americans achieve upward mobility and move near their churches in Little Falls or West Paterson, what impact will that increased ethnic visibility in those fairly non-ethnic suburbs have? As relatively recent immigrants, the full measure of Arab American residential patterning has yet to be determined, but these are the present indications.

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